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ABSTRACT

This report is based upon one component of an Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I project in the Greensboro, North Carolina, public schools for the 1973-74 school term. The Diagnostic Reading Center, designed to help ensure a successful educational experience for the Title I children with reading difficulties, was developed to meet the following objectives: (1) A diagnostic-prescriptive center for overcoming deficiencies in reading skills and attitudes; (2) An inservice facility for classroom teachers to demonstrate and develop materials and approaches for teaching reading to the educationally deprived child; (3) A preservice teaching program operated in conjunction with local colleges and universities to prepare future classroom teachers and reading specialists for the teaching of reading to educationally disadvantaged children; (4) A program for parents of Title I children, to educate them in methods and materials they can use to support their child's growth in reading skills and attitudes about reading. Students accepted at the Center in grades three and four predominantly, typically need long-term remediation (a school year or longer). Evaluation reports for the two years during which this component has been in operation show that this activity significantly improved the educational attainment of disadvantaged children in the area of reading. (Author/JM)

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DIAGNOSTIC READING CENTER

Greensboro, North Carolina

A Program

**To Help Severely Disadvantaged Children Overcome
Their Reading Deficiencies**

July, 1974

Raleigh, North Carolina

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FOREWORD

School administrative units in North Carolina have been developing and implementing Elementary and Secondary Education Act Title I projects since 1965. Information and experience gained through the years have been helpful to individuals at the local educational agency level in planning more effective projects.

This report is based upon one component of a Title I ESEA project in the Greensboro, North Carolina, public schools for the 1973-74 school term. Evaluation reports for the two years during which this component has been in operation show that this activity significantly improved the educational attainment of disadvantaged children in the area of reading.

School administrative units, in reviewing the educational needs of the disadvantaged children they serve, may use this project as a guide when they consider their specific requirements and resources.



ANALYSIS OF NEEDS

The Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills were administered to third and fourth grade students in September, 1972. This testing indicated that a large percentage of students in the Greensboro City Schools were at the lowest quartile in reading.

Administered in December, 1973, to a sampling of 226 students at the 4.3 grade level in five Title I schools, these tests revealed a mean grade achievement level in total reading of 2.4. This was almost two years below grade level for the average child tested.

The initial screening of students to be served at the Diagnostic Reading Center was done by the regular school's own professional staff: teachers, principal, counselor and psychologist. Students selected by the home school staff were those reading two or more years below grade level.

Students referred by their school to the Diagnostic Reading Center were then given the Gray Oral Reading Test, the Gates MacGinitie Reading Test, and D. C. Heath's Criterion Referenced Test of Reading Skills by the Center's staff to corroborate the school's judgment concerning the extent of the reading deficiency. If the 4th grade students referred were found to be reading two or more years below grade level, 3rd graders at one or more years below grade level, and 2nd graders at or below the 1.5 level of the Gates MacGinitie test, they were accepted by the Reading Center, with the provision that the Center's staff anticipated that the reading lag could be remediated by appropriate instruction.

Of the approximately 200 Title I students in grades 3 and 4 referred to the Reading Center during the 1973-74 school year, the average student scored at or below the primer reading level on the Gray Oral Reading Test administered upon acceptance to the Center's program. Indeed, it was a common experience to receive students from the third and fourth grade levels of Title I schools reading at or below the pre-primer level without any indication of mental retardation as a cause for their severe reading disability.

CONTEXT OF PROGRAM

Greensboro is located in the Piedmont Industrial Crescent of North Carolina. It has experienced considerable growth in the last ten years. With a population of approximately 150,000 and an area of nearly 60 square miles, Greensboro is the state's second largest city. Approximately 32% of the population is non-white; less than 1/10th is composed of other minorities.

Greensboro is an industrial, commercial, business, and educational center. Some of the nation's largest corporations have either direct or indirect interests located there. Two universities and three colleges, with total enrollment in excess of 15,000 students, are located within the corporate limits of the city.

Employment statistics show that the highest percent of males in the labor force is within the 25-34 age range. Although figures are not available for Greensboro only, the median family income for Guilford County is \$7,624.

The educational level of parents varies from one section of the community to another. According to 1970 census figures, the median school year completed for persons 25 years of age and older is 12.2. For the same age group, 23 percent have less than one year of high school, 54 percent have had four years of high school or more, and 18 percent have had four years of college or more.

The public schools of Greensboro are completely desegregated, K through 12.



PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Diagnostic Reading Center is designed to help ensure a successful educational experience for the Title I children with reading difficulties. The facility was developed to meet the following objectives:

- A diagnostic-prescriptive center for overcoming deficiencies in reading skills and attitudes about reading among selected children.
- An inservice facility for classroom teachers to demonstrate and develop materials and approaches for teaching reading to the educationally deprived child.
- A preservice teaching program operated in conjunction with local colleges and universities to prepare future classroom teachers and reading specialists for the teaching of reading to educationally disadvantaged children.
- A program for parents of Title I children, to educate them in methods and materials they can use to support their child's growth in reading skills and attitudes about reading.

To achieve these objectives the Reading Center offered the following programs during its second year of operation:

The students were brought in the Title I bus to the Reading Center for diagnosis and remediation of specific reading deficiencies and learning needs. Cooperatively with their classroom teacher and parents (when possible), a learning prescription was developed for each child. The prescription included roles for the parents, classroom teacher, and Reading Center staff; and was implemented at the child's home, school, and Reading Center.

The Diagnostic Reading Center operated in close affiliation with the local school's classroom program by supporting the classroom teacher's work in teaching reading, offering the classroom teacher the opportunity to participate in the diagnosis of his/her Title I students' reading needs, and prescribing instructional strategies for the classroom teacher to use in working with these students in his/her classroom.

The Center also cooperated with local colleges and universities in developing practicum experiences for future teachers and reading specialists in teaching reading to the Title I child. These colleges and universities included the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, A & T State University, and Guilford and Greensboro Colleges.

The Center's instructional day was organized into four instructional periods of 60 minutes each. Based on the severity of their reading disability, students were prescribed the following periods of instruction at the Diagnostic Reading Center: 5 days a week for 60 minutes a day; 3 days a week for 60 minutes; and 2 days a week for 60 minutes.

In addition to the set instructional periods at the Center, the classroom teacher and child's parents devoted time to working with the child on prescribed reading approaches.

Students accepted at the Center typically need long term remediation (a school year or longer). When a student reaches a reading level of one year or less below grade level on a standardized reading achievement test or reading inventory, his formal instruction at the Reading Center is terminated.

PERSONNEL

The professional staff of the Diagnostic Reading Center consists of a director, a diagnostician-reading specialist, and two instructional supervisors. Non-professional staff includes five instructional aides (high school graduates), a receptionist-secretary, and a driver licensed to drive a school bus.

The **director** of the Center is responsible for

the development and implementation of the program; coordination of the Center's programs with on-going public school programs; inservice programs for the Center staff, public school teachers involved with Title I students, and parents of Title I children; and research projects concerned with the teaching of reading to Title I children.

The **diagnostician-reading specialist** is responsible for diagnosing the students' reading deficiencies and learning needs; prescribing appropriate learning strategies and instructional material for individual students; keeping records of the growth of individual students in reading skills; inservice for the Reading Center staff and classroom teachers on techniques of diagnosis and prescription writing; and providing remedial reading instruction.

The **instructional supervisors** implement the individual prescriptions for each student; supervise the instructional aides, student teachers, and volunteers; check on and modify individual prescriptions; take part in the inservice programs for instructional aides, classroom teachers, and parents of Title I children; decorate and design instructional areas of the Reading Center; keep records of progress made by students; keep in close touch with classroom teachers to report progress of students and maintain working relationships; and provide remedial reading instruction.

The **instructional aides** are responsible for carrying out the individual prescriptions for students under the general supervision of the instructional supervisor; keeping records of progress made by individual students; and keeping the instructional supervisor informed about each student's progress with instructional strategies and materials prescribed.

The **receptionist-secretary** organizes the files; is responsible for ordering materials, requesting inservice consultants, making requests for trips, etc.; typing; and answering the phone and greeting visitors.

The **driver's** basic responsibility is the transportation of students to and from the Reading Center and their schools or home.



INSERVICE/PRESERVICE

Programs of inservice/preservice by the Diagnostic Reading Center were provided for three different groups: the staff of the Center; the classroom teachers of Title I students assigned to the Center; and future teachers of disadvantaged students.

Staff Development

The Director of the Diagnostic Reading Center, in cooperation with his staff, designed and implemented a program of staff development that included:

- visitations to exemplary reading centers
- attendance at professional conferences
- use of consultants to analyze and suggest improved approaches for the Diagnostic Reading Center's operation and use of diagnostic and instructional materials and strategies.
- use of Diagnostic Reading Center's staff with specific background and skills to offer their expertness to fellow workers
- development of a professional library

Inservice for classroom teachers

To ensure that the Title I child's experience at the Reading Center was supported in the classroom setting, it was necessary that the classroom teacher both understand and participate in the diagnosis and prescription for the reading deficiency and learning needs of the child. It was also necessary that the classroom teacher be aware of the progress being made by the child and instruction being offered in the Reading Center, and help reinforce and extend that progress in the classroom's program. Therefore, the following programs and procedures were instituted:

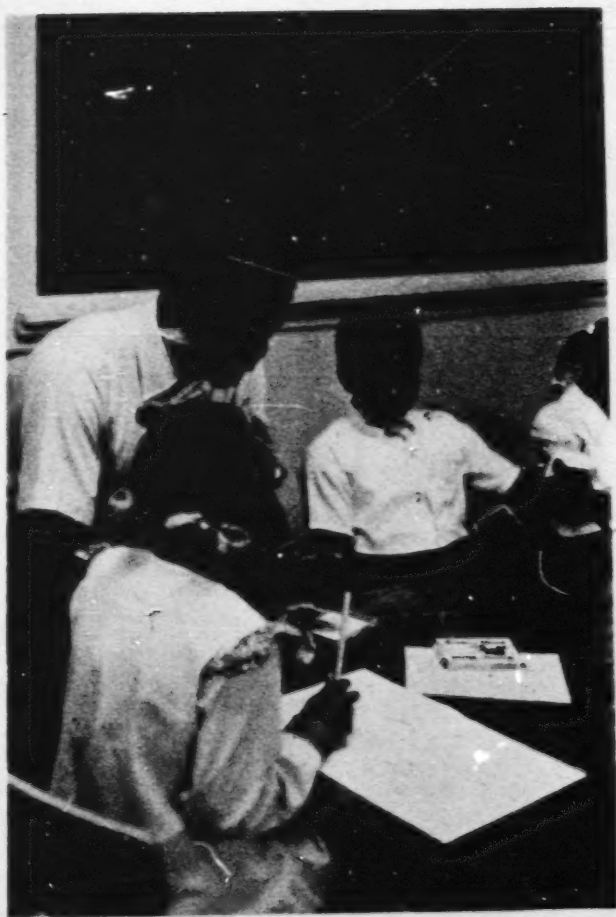
1. The classroom teacher was required to spend two full days at the Reading Center following the student's acceptance to the program. During these two days the teacher:
 - Became acquainted with the Reading Center's staff, facilities, and services
 - Observed the student interacting in instructional settings with the Reading Center staff
 - Became familiar with a wide array of materials and instructional approaches used at the Reading Center to teach reading
 - Observed the Reading Center's approach to diagnosing reading deficiencies and learning needs, and establishing individual objectives for each child
 - Received orientation on content of prescription for each child.

2. The classroom teacher was responsible for implementing a part of the Reading Center's prescription sheet for the student. The teacher was also kept informed of his/her student's progress through the use of this prescription sheet, and was asked to determine if the learning objectives had been met.
3. The Reading Center offered workshops for the classroom teacher of Title I children in the use of new materials and methods for teaching reading to the deprived student in the classroom setting.

Preservice for Future Teachers

To develop a corp of beginning teachers who could bring to their new teaching position the awareness, skills, and attitudes necessary to help prevent reading failure of deprived children, the Reading Center provided the following:

1. A student teaching experience developed by the Reading Center and the local college or university. This experience included a portion of time spent at the Reading Center, involved in the diagnostic prescriptive approaches and learning strategies being used to teach reading to deprived students.
2. Use of the Reading Center's staff and facilities to bolster and help develop college courses that focus on the "Disabled Reader."



FACILITIES

The Diagnostic Reading Center is housed in the ground floor of the David D. Jones School, 502 South Street, Greensboro. The Center was designed as a place where all children—and especially boys, who outnumber the girls about five to one—would want to come. Some of the physical features that turned the spacious school basement facilities into a place children wanted to be in, even after school, were:

- A spook corner, with a poster of the Wolfman, and spooky stories with tapes, and comic books.

- A log cabin home that can comfortably accommodate up to five students who love to hide away from the rest of the world for instruction, reading, talk, or play with word games.

- A display of art, easels, clay, blackboards, chalk puzzles, record players, tape players and recorders, paper, pencils, crayons, typewriters, and paperback books in open view and available for use.

- Pictures of each of the students in view for all to see and understand that this is **their** reading center.

MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT

The Diagnostic Reading Center attempts to maintain a complete assortment of equipment and supplies for the teaching of reading. The Center serves as an instructional resource center for teachers of disadvantaged children. Therefore, a real effort is made to have on hand examples of a variety of materials currently on the market. This also makes it possible to prescribe whatever materials, devices, or teaching approaches are most appropriate for a particular child.



PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Parents play a central role in their child's success with reading by the values, model, reading experiences, and reading materials they supply the child in the home. For this reason the Reading Center involves parents of Title I children in supporting their children's classroom experiences with reading.

The parent is asked to visit the Reading Center at the time the child is accepted into the program. As a result, the parent becomes acquainted with the Reading Center's staff, facilities, and services; observes the child interacting with the Reading Center's staff; becomes familiar with the wide array of materials and strategies which can be used at home to support the child's classroom experiences with

reading; and becomes aware of the role he/she can play in helping the child to read.

A copy of the child's prescription sheet is sent home. Included in this prescription is the role expected of the child's parents at home. In addition, materials and supplies (such as paperback books, paper, and pencils) needed to implement the role are provided.

Inservice programs are provided for parents covering specific questions and concerns raised by parents concerning the reading program prescribed for their child. In addition, classes in basic reading skills are offered parents with reading deficiencies of their own.

Title I parent-volunteers are encouraged to participate as instructional aides in the Reading Center's programs.



EVALUATION

The Diagnostic Reading Center serves students in grades 3 and 4 predominantly, who represent the very lowest end of achievement in their Title I schools. In the two to three years of regular instruction, these children have demonstrated rates of growth in reading skills far below the desired goal of one month of growth in skills for one month of instruction as indicated on norm-based tests such as the Gates-MacGinitie.

Alternate forms of the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test were administered to all students at the beginning of the school year in September 1973 and again at the end of the school year in May 1974. In September, the mean score on the vocabulary segment for the 121 children tested was 1.81, and in comprehension it was 1.73, which is equivalent to the

Table 1

Mean Test Scores on Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test
for Students Served at the Diagnostic Reading Center

Number Students	Months at Center	Pre-Test Sept. 1973		Post-Test May 1974		Gain	
		Vocabulary	Comprehension	Voc.	Comp.	Voc.	Comm.
123	9	1.81	1.73	2.83	2.65	1.02	.92

first year eighth month and first year seventh month of instruction on this norm-based test. On the post test in May, the mean score in vocabulary was 2.83 and in comprehension, 2.65. This represents a mean growth in the vocabulary segment of 1.02 or one year of growth for nine months of instruction, and in comprehension of .92 or one month of growth for one month of instruction.

As indicated by the growth rates on both segments of the Gates-MacGinitie, intervention by the Center's program has resulted in a marked increase in rate of learning. Students who were formerly averaging one month growth in skills for three or more months of school attendance now achieved at a rate of learning a little higher than a normal sampling of the population, that is a little better than one

month of growth for one month of instruction.

The D. C. Heath Criterion Referenced Test of Phonic Skills was administered to the 123 students served at the Reading Center in September 1973 and again in May 1974.

As an indication of the very limited growth in reading skills achieved by students referred to the Diagnostic Reading Center in the previous two to three years of their regular classroom instruction, 16 students had not mastered 24 of the 26 capital or upper case letters of the alphabet, and 19 had not mastered the lower case letters. As for phonic skills, it can be seen that few students had mastered phonic skills to the level that would enable them to decode a simple one syllable word such as pat (CaC), fit (CiC) or put (CaC), for example.



Table 2

Number of Students Served by Diagnostic Reading Center Mastering Phonic Skills on the D. C. Heath Criterion-Referenced Test Administered in Sept. 1973 and again in May 1974

Criterion Reference Test:	PRE	POST
Alphabet (Upper Case)	107	121
Alphabet (Lower Case)	104	123
Decoding 1 (CaC, CaCe)	14	100
Decoding 2 (CiC, CiCe)	23	106
Decoding 3 (CuC, CuCe)	15	98
Decoding 4 (CoC, CoCe, CeC)	12	94
Decoding 5 (Initial & Final Digraphs)	10	65
Decoding 6 (Initial Blends)	6	54
Decoding 7 (Final Blends)	4	43
Decoding 8 (Other Vowel Spellings)	0	26

Solid growth toward mastery of phonic skills can be observed for students served both at the Center and at their home schools. And this growth can be interpreted as an important indication of the students' future growth potential toward a successful reading experience.

The Diagnostic Reading Center's list of basic sight vocabulary, which is divided into levels from pre-primer (pp) through third grade second semester (3²), was administered to students served at the Center in September 1973 and again in May 1974. Criterion of mastery is judged by the student's ability to read 90% of the words at an instructional level. If a student was unable to read 90% of the words at the pp level, he was judged to be at the readiness (R) stage of instruction. As observed on Table 3, 106 of the 123 children served at the Center scored in September at the primer level or below. This is an indication of the extreme severity of reading failure of students served at the Reading Center

At the end of the instructional programs, solid growth toward mastery of basic sight vocabulary words can be observed and can be interpreted as an important indication of the student's future growth potential toward a successful reading experience.



Table 3

Number of Students Served at the Diagnostic Reading Center Achieving Mastery at Readiness (R) through Third Grade, second semester (3²) instructional reading levels on the Center's Basic Sight Vocabulary List.

	R	PP	P	1 ²	2 ¹	2 ²	3 ¹	3 ²
Sept. 1973	30	57	19	10	4	2	1	0
May 1974	5	8	29	25	20	15	8	13

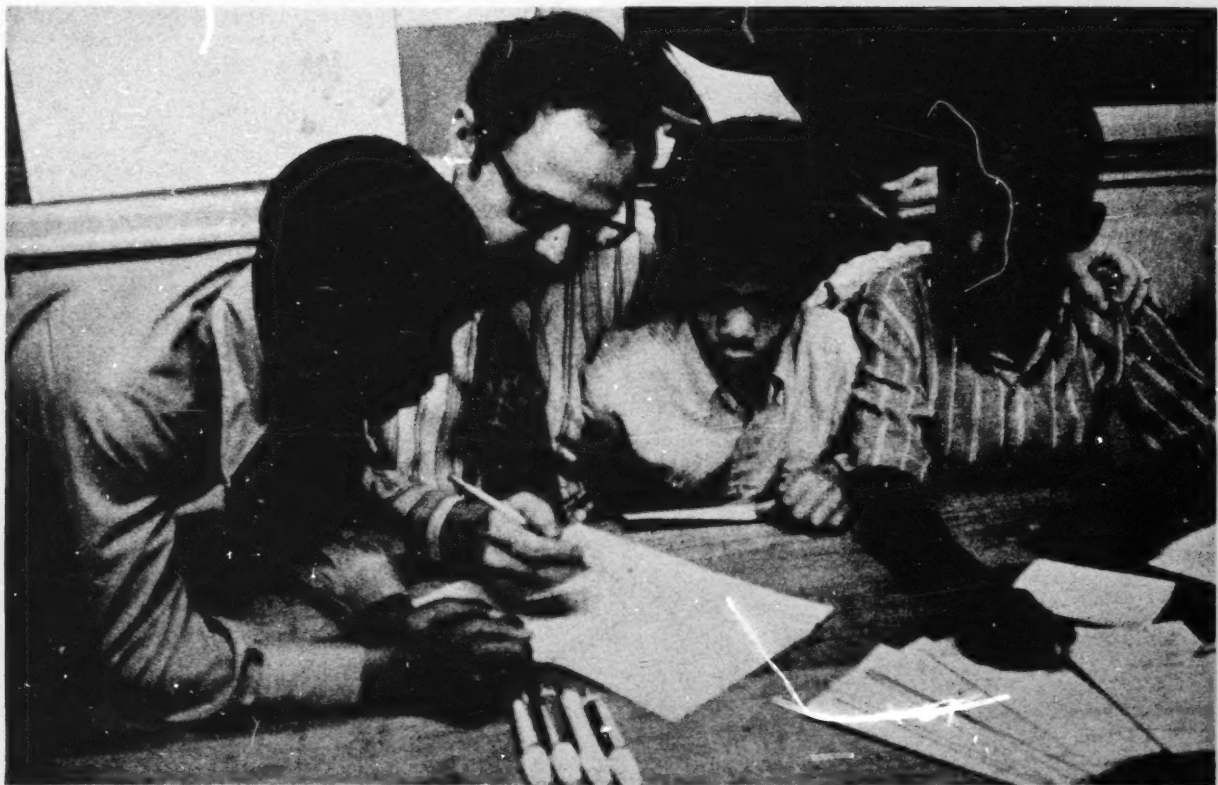
BUDGET

The budget for the Diagnostic Reading Center during the 1973-74 school term was as follows:

Supplies	\$ 3,600
Equipment	1,191
Salaries	108,000
Travel	1,005

Total	\$113,796
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Number of participants	220
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FURTHER INFORMATION

Additional information about the Diagnostic Reading Center can be obtained from any of the following people:

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